

CONCEPTUAL FLEXIBILITY ACTIVITIES

VENUS DE MILO ARMS

Getting older adults to extend through their trunk or lift their ribs can be difficult. This imaginative exercise invites participants to pretend they are the famous sculpture, Venus de Milo—which has no arms! Without their arms they'll certainly appreciate their torso a little more as they discover untapped ranges of motion.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Showcases trunk and shoulder flexibility in a fun and memorable way.
- ⦿ Enhances body awareness and appreciation for the human body.
- ⦿ Engages participants' imagination and body together for long-lasting learning.
- ⦿ Helps with the everyday skill of reaching.

How to Do It »

The Start

Ask participants to pretend for a moment that they have become Venus de Milo, the famous statue that has no arms. Participants can fold their arms on their chest or place one arm on their waist in front and one at waist level in back. Then ask them to sit tall, away from the back of their chair.

The Moves

- ⦿ Imagine a light cord is hanging just above you and you need to reach for it without arms. You can only reach with your right shoulder.
 - How high can you reach?
 - Can you feel your ribs lifting and stretching, too?
 - Can you feel your skin moving and stretching?
 - How much of a reaching distance do you get from just lifting the shoulder?
 - Nice try.



- ⦿ With the arms still against the torso, reach for a book on an imaginary table in front of you. Again you can use only one shoulder.
 - Do you notice how much forward distance your shoulders can give you?
 - Reach with the other shoulder.

- Now reach backward, as if you are reaching for a pair of sunglasses on a table behind you. With arms still against your torso, reach backward with one shoulder.
 - Reach with one shoulder.
 - Reach back with the other shoulder.
- Find the circumference for how far your shoulders can reach.
 - Reach up, down, and backward with your shoulder. Do it again.
 - What are you beginning to notice about shoulder flexibility?
 - Did you notice that increased range of motion in the shoulder can extend reach 4 to 8 inches?



- Put your arms back on—pop, pop.
 - With your arms back on, reach one hand up, toward the imaginary light cord.
 - Use your Venus de Milo arms to reach even farther, stretching with your shoulders to extend how far the arm will reach.
 - Did you get more distance reaching with Venus de Milo arms?
 - Did you notice your ribs and shoulders also lifting upward?
 - Reach forward and use Venus de Milo arms to add inches to your reach. Is that better?
 - Reach back, Venus de Milo style. Is that better?



Live It »

Flexibility and function go arm in arm. Do your participants notice how much more distance they can get using the functional flexibility in their shoulders? That's the take-home message.